



The sons of Nikolaos K. Katsakis with their wives and children. Athens, 1909

## FAMILY HISTORY RESEARCH

When using the term ***Family History Research*** or ***Genealogical Research*** we mean: finding information about our ancestors one generation after another progressively, as far back as we can go, with all the brothers and sisters of each person, and the birth date and place, the marriage date and place, the death date and place (if dead), of each individual, and also his/her life history. This is our goal!

Does family history research sound difficult? It is not as difficult as it sounds. You can do it!

The best way to collect information is to ***do it yourself***. By doing it yourself you are sure the information is accurate.

Should you decide to ***hire someone*** to do it for you, make sure you hire someone who:

- ***Is honest.*** Check with others who have hired the same person or firm.
- ***Knows the language well.*** You can check this by having them translate for you a paragraph or two, in your

presence, and then have it translated officially by the Greek Consulate.

- ***Gives you documented information.*** Ask for copies of the record where information was found. Check if the information was correctly translated from the document by having the document officially translated by the Greek Consulate.
- ***Has experience.*** Ask them to show you how much research they have done on their own line, especially if they are of Greek descent.

## Chapter 1

### BEGINNING YOUR RESEARCH

#### **A. BEFORE YOU BEGIN RESEARCH YOU NEED TO:**

**1. Know the exact place of origin** - the place where your immigrant ancestor was born. Tips you will find on p.6 of this, and on a paper titled *Tracing Immigrant Origins*, published by The Family History Library. For ways of contacting the Family History Library see chapter 2, p.19.

**2. Know the exact Greek name of your immigrant ancestor.** (See Writing Greek Names, p.3). Tips on p.6 of this and the above mentioned publication *Tracing Immigrant Origins*, are also helpful for this aspect of your research.

**3. Know the Dimos/Koinotis** [municipality<sup>1</sup>/community], the **eparhia** [district], **nomos** [county], and **Iera Mitropolis** [diocese] to which the town belonged at the time your ancestors lived there, and to which it belongs today. Also in which town their offices are located today. An excellent book for this information is the *Greek Gazetteer*, volume 1 and volume 2, by Lica H. Catsakis. (See chapter 6, p.72.)

**4. Know basics about:**

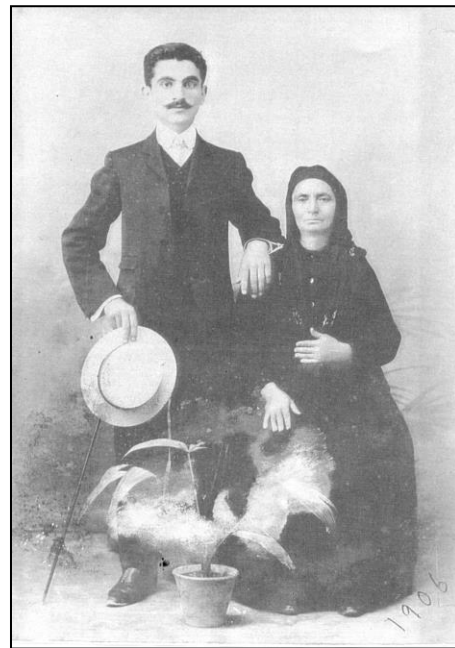
a. Greek History - especially the history that affected moves of population, refugees, etc. (See chapter 3, p.45.)

b. Greek Migration. Includes Emigration from Greece to other countries and Immigration to Greece from other countries. It is important to remember that there are parts of Greece that were under foreign rule before 1912 or even as late as 1944 (see map chapter 3 p.52). For example, if a person went from

Crete to Athens in 1887 he was considered an immigrant. Or if a person came to the USA from Thessaloniki [Salonika] in 1904, he would be listed as coming from Turkey.

c. Record Keeping in Greece (see chapter 2, p.9).

d. The Greek language. It is not as difficult as you may think it is. Learn the Greek alphabet, and basic words needed for your research (see chapter 10, p.123).



Vasileios N. Katsakis with his mother  
Eleni D. Mantafoouni-Katsaki. Athens, 1906

#### **B. WRITE DOWN THE INFORMATION YOU HAVE**

Before you start gathering information you need to organize the information you already have, and write it down. This will make it easy for you to see what information you need to find.

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<sup>1</sup> To understand better the meanings of words such as *municipality* see Appendix A Glossary, p.139.

### 1. *Using the Internet or a software*

Today technology makes our work so much easier.

- a. You can use an Internet sight such as *FamilySearc.org* (free), or *Ancestry.com* (free for LDS members, but not free for others), or any other family history sight.
- b. You can use a computer software made for genealogy. Excellent and inexpensive software is the “*Ancestral Quest*.” I prefer this one because it opens directly without conversion any file of the “*Personal Ancestral File*” (PAF). The PAF is now out of use, but maybe some of your relatives has one of those old PAF files with valuable information about your ancestors. Searching the Internet will help you see many more programs, so you can choose the one you like.

### 2. *Using printed forms*

If you do not want to use the computer you can still record your information by using printed forms such as *Pedigree Charts*, and *Family Group Records*. These can be kept in a three ring binder. Such forms are available at genealogical supply stores, or genealogical societies, and at the Family History Library.



**Nikolaos D. Katsakis with father  
Dimitrios N. Katsakis. Athens, 1914**

### 3. *How to record the information*

Write down the information you have, and leave blank the parts you do not have information for. If you have some information that you are not sure whether it is accurate or not, write it down, and make a note that you are not sure whether this information is correct or not.

### **C. WRITING GREEK NAMES**

Recording names of people who were born in Greece and names of places in Greece is done in a different way than the way it is done for names of people and places in other countries.

**Writing the names the right way will prevent confusion and obstacles in your research.**

Usually these names are given to you by a relative or from a document, and were given to you in the English language (or the language used at the country where you live). But most likely the way you have these names cannot be recognized in Greece. In order to find out what was the Greek name of your ancestor or his/her birth place you will need to do some research in the U.S.A. (or the country to which your ancestor first went when he left Greece). There are genealogical societies, and individuals, that are more experienced and could give you more detail information regarding research in the country your ancestor emigrated to. The best source for information and instruction for research in International areas - including USA and Canada - is *The Family History Library* in Salt Lake City, Utah, (see chapter 2 pp.19-24). The Family History Library provides a “Research Outline” for many countries. If there is no “Research Outline” for the country you are interested in, you can request information and/or instructions by e-mail or regular mail. In this manual we discuss research in Greece. However some suggestions for research in other countries are included in this publication. (See pp.6-7.)

### *Names of persons*

For the immigrant ancestor (the person of your family who was the first person to come to your country) it is best to write his name both ways: the way it was in Greece and also the way it was in the country he lived as an immigrant. This is necessary because if you need a certificate of that person from Greece the name should be written the way he/she was known in Greece, and if you need a certificate of that person in the USA (or the country they emigrated to) the name should be written the way this person was known in the USA (or the country they emigrated to).

*For example:*

John Nicholas Papas is the Americanized name. The Greek name was Ioannis N. Papadopoulos. The surname “Papas” is a short for a longer name such as Papadopoulos, Papagiannis, Papanikolaos etc. The “N” is **not** a middle name. It is the initial of his father’s given name (Nikolaos). If you ask for information about “Ioannis Nikolaos Papadopoulos” you will receive an answer that such person does not exist. Females use their father’s initial as long as they bear their father’s last name (their maiden name). When they are married their last name changes but also the middle initial changes, becoming the initial of the given name of her husband.

*For example:*

My name at birth was Harikleia V. Katsaki, (my father’s given name was Vasileios). When I married, my name was Harikleia N. Vafeiadou (my husband’s given name was Nikolaos). When I emigrated to the U.S.A. I changed my name to Lica Hariclea Catsakis (note the different spelling used in the US). In Greece I have to use the Greek spelling.

For more about Greek names see chapter 9, pp.115, 145.

### *Names of towns*

The names of towns need to be followed by the name of the *eparhia* [επαρχία], meaning district, and the name of the *nomos* [νομός], meaning county, to which the town belongs. In order to write the names in their Greek spelling using the Latin [English] alphabet you need a system that is simple to use, easy to understand, and can be used in computers. This system is explained by the Transliteration Chart (see chapter 10, p.130).

## **D. SEARCHING FOR INFORMATION**

Today the Internet is very helpful. But there are also genealogical societies and libraries that can be helpful to you for your research. The most helpful genealogical library is the *Family History Library* in Salt Lake City, Utah, USA, and its more than 4,000 branches all over the world called *Family History Centers*. For more information about the *Family History Library*, and how it can help you see chapter 2, p.19.

### **Step One**

Decide which information to search for. Begin by researching the more recent part of your ancestry in the country your family lives now. Look for names, dates, and places, in diaries, certificates, obituaries, old letters and photographs etc. Also contact relatives to obtain information they may have. Record what you learn. In order to avoid future repetition of your search, make sure that you write down where you searched and what you searched for.

### **Step Two**

Select a relative or ancestor, born in Greece, for whom you would like to know more.

Then decide what you want to learn about that individual, such as the parents' names and an exact birth date. Most genealogists do a "survey" of research previously done by others. You may save time and gain valuable information by doing such a survey. The procedure is explained below, on section "Survey of Previous Research."

### **Step Three**

When you have completed the survey, you will be ready to begin original research. Original research is the process of searching through original documents looking for information about your ancestors. Determine what records you will need to search. See chapter 2 "Sources for Genealogical Research" p.9.



**Athanasios A. Kitsikopoulos with wife and daughters. Pelasgia Fthiotidos, 1908**

### **Step Four**

Locate the records you need to use. In the country you live, try the Greek Orthodox Church parishes, the Family History Library, the Library of Congress in the U.S.A. etc. For details see Chapter 2 "Sources for Genealogical Research" p.9.

### **Step Five**

Search through the records with a specific goal in mind. Then evaluate the information you find, write it down, and select further objectives.

### **SURVEY OF PREVIOUS RESEARCH**

See what research has already been done on your family by other people. Unfortunately not many Greek people are involved in family history, therefore there is only a very slim possibility to find that someone else has already done your family history, and has it ready for you. This can happen for people who originate from other countries where genealogical or family history research has been done for many years.

1. Ask relatives. Maybe a distant cousin or another relative has a family tree. Ask those relatives in the country you live now, as well as relatives in Greece.
2. The Internet. There are many web sites that have name lists. Those lists or the family trees have been submitted by various people who have done research for their families. To find information about your family on the Internet it means that someone has done the research before you, and has submitted it.
3. The Family History Library has produced several genealogical indexes of families that have already been researched. The information of these indexes, such as *Ancestral File*, *International Genealogical Index*, etc. include a limited number of Greek names for the reasons mentioned above. Since the Family History Library's access to genealogical sources in Greece has been quite limited, these indexes have not developed into the valuable source that they are for other countries. Nevertheless, you should not ignore them. For more information about the

Family History Library, and its usefulness, see chapter 2, p.19.

4. Is it your family? If you find your surname on the Internet on *FamilySearch.org*, or *Ancestry.com* etc. try to determine whether the entry actually pertains to *your* family. All persons with the same surname are not necessarily related. Some original research is needed before you can connect your ancestry to families listed in the above mentioned sources.

## E. BEGINNING ORIGINAL RESEARCH

Before you can begin researching for your ancestors in Greece you must determine exactly who it was that came from Greece, and what was the **name** by which he was known in Greece. Equally important is that you know specifically what town he was from. Greece has no central archive of records which are of genealogical value. Records of births, marriages, and deaths, were kept locally, at the town or the *eparhia* [district] or the *nomos* [county]. In order to find church, civil, or other records needed for your research, you must determine the specific **place** from which your ancestors came. This information can be found in the place where your ancestor came after he/she left Greece.

### ◆ Research in the U.S.A.

If you need the original name, or the place of origin, of your immigrant ancestor, the following can be helpful:

- A publication titled *Tracing Immigrant Origins* published by The Family History Library, written in English, and can be purchased at the FHL in Salt Lake City or any Family History Center, or it can be ordered by mail.
- The *Passenger List* (Ship Manifest) is a great source of information about the immigrants. If you do not know the name of the ship or the date of arrival you can use the *Soundex*.



The *Soundex* will give you a code for your ancestor's surname which will look something like K 2 6 4 (if his last name begins with the letter "K"). Using that code you will find in a directory for Passenger Lists (not for Census) the number of a microfilm that has index cards of passengers with similar surnames. The cards are arranged in alphabetical order of the given names. Keep in mind that they are not in strict alphabetical order; therefore it is best to search them thoroughly. Each card has some numbers or other information. These, through another directory, will show you the number of the microfilm which contains a copy of the actual Ship Manifest. The **Ship Manifest** is a large book listing the full names of the immigrants, and in columns, information about each of them, including who was the nearest relative they left in their homeland, whom they will meet upon arrival, the address of that person, and much more detailed information.

Microfilms of the Passenger Lists are available at the Library of Congress, and at the Family History Library, in Salt Lake City, Utah. You might also be able to order those films at the Family History Center in your area, if you know the number of the film.

- The *Declaration of Intention for Naturalization*, that your immigrant ancestor filed, has valuable information. It can be found at the State Archives of

the State in which your ancestor lived when he/she applied for citizenship.

- The **Preliminary Form for Petition for Naturalization** is even more helpful because it has names of people and places written in Greek, the way the immigrant wrote them.
- The **Baptism Certificate** of the immigrant's children, as long as they have been baptized in the Greek Orthodox Church. These certificates include detail information written both in Greek and English. Such certificates can be obtained from the local Orthodox Parish of the town in which the family lived at the time the children were born. Be sure to make the request by mail, not by telephone or e-mail.

#### ♦ Research in Pontus, Asia Minor, East Thrace, and other areas of Turkey

- The Family History Library has some **microfilms** of records of Greeks from **Asia Minor**, and other parts of Turkey. These records are listed in the Family History Library Catalog under *Turkey*. Since the microfilms are cataloged by locality you need to know the Greek and Turkish name of the place of origin. You also need to study the basics about Turkish geography. An excellent **book** is: *Γεωγραφία της Μικράς Ασίας*, *Geografia tis Mikras Asias*, [Geography of Asia Minor] (see chapter 2, p.25).
- The *Idryma Meizonos Ellinismou* is an **organization** of people from Pontus, Asia Minor and other parts of Turkey. The address is: Idryma Meizonos Ellinismou, Pouloupoulou 38, 11851 Athens GREECE  
URL: [http:// www.ime.gr](http://www.ime.gr)  
E-mail: [info@ime.gr](mailto:info@ime.gr)  
Tel. (30-210) 342-2292  
FAX: (30-210) 342-2272

- You may want to try the *Ecumenical Patriarchate*, which is the headquarters of the **Orthodox Church**. Its offices are located in Istanbul, Turkey (see chapter 7, p.79).
- For research in **Pontus** you may also want to try the **book**: *Ο Ελληνισμός του Ευξείνου Πόντου*, *O Ellinismos tou Euxeinou Pontou* or *O Hellenismos tou Efxinou Pontou* [The Greeks of Pontus] by B. Kardasis, published by Ekdoseis Militos, Athens 1997, 265 pages, available in English.

#### ♦ Research in Cyprus, Albania, and Hungary

- Check the Family History Library Catalog for microfilms of Greek churches in each of those countries. It is highly recommended that you check often, as more microfilming is done in those countries. Also keep in mind that there may be more countries in which records of Greek churches have been microfilmed.

#### ♦ Research in Europe, Africa, Australia, and South America etc.

Check genealogical societies in the country you are interested in. Also check if the Family History Library has a publication titled *Research Outline* for the country you are interested in. If not, ask to talk to a library consultant whose specialty is research in that country



